

# OPINION

THE BATTALION

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## EDITORIAL

### HONORING THE CODE System ensures fairness

An Aggie does not lie, cheat, steal or tolerate those who do. Thanks to the new honor system that will be put into place this spring by the Academic Integrity Task Force, these words will find a rejuvenated role in the everyday lives of Aggies.

For too long, cheating has gone unnoticed on the Texas A&M campus because professors played the biggest role in enforcing academic integrity. The new system will allow professors to shed this burden and, more importantly, provide a structured punishment system for violators, ensuring that every case is handled the same way.

A student accused of academic dishonesty after this spring can face either his professor or a five-member subgroup of the 50-member honor council. This will ensure that unnecessarily extreme punishments are avoided.

The convicted cheater will receive an 'F' on his transcript and can choose to take a remediation class that identifies why the student committed the dastardly deed and helps him try to avoid the same mistake. Upon completion of the class, the failing grade is removed from his transcript. Giving the student a second chance will allow him to repent and learn from his mistake and allow A&M to eliminate an ineffective zero-tolerance policy.

If a professor catches the student in another moment of chicanery, he will be either probated or expelled from the University, weeding out habitual cheaters.

These new guidelines will provide a mold from which all future punishments can be shaped. They are a fair balance between sorely needed punishment for dishonest Aggies and understanding and rehabilitation for those who ignorantly commit scholastic dishonesty which will ensure A&M retains the honest reputation that 127 years of integrity has earned.

## THE BATTALION

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### MAIL CALL

#### RIAA's actions illegal, harmful

In response to Mike Walters' Sept. 23 column:

This should be a wakeup call to today's generation. Senators, organizations and individual groups such as boycott-riaa.com are not backing the fight against the RIAA because file-sharing is wrong; they are standing up because file-sharing is right. The public is entirely within its legal limits to do what it has been doing for the past 10 years.

In the past, businesses called the radio and VCRs "bad." Now it is the Internet and p2p servers. This is wrong.

We have the right to download and today's generation should arm themselves with the legal knowledge to not let that slip away. Today's generation has a habit of sitting idly by as what they know and love is pulled out from underneath them because they think they can't stand up to yesterday's generation.

The RIAA is illegally monitoring our activities and is using the information they obtain for their own profit. The "sue 'em all" campaign of the RIAA has

already taken its toll on the youth and the elderly.

Rick Bowers  
Class of 2002

#### Promoting Aggie hospitality

I have recently read many articles from Virginia Tech Fans that are related to the Aggie spirit and hospitality. I don't think that we as the Aggie family take the time enough to point out some of the better sides of what we exemplify as college students and Aggie sports fans. The VTech fans were very appreciative of our fans taking our loss on the road with a grain of salt and being good sports about it. It makes me glad to see that Ags everywhere purposefully exude hospitality towards our opposing fans.

So when Pittsburgh gets here to try to oust the Aggies, I would hope that we can be as courteous as we were to Virginia Tech last year. The Panthers are ranked 17th in the nation and deserve some respect (off the field).

Michael Gorney  
Class of 2003

## Ruthless Rumsfeld

### Prisoners at Guantanamo Bay denied basic rights

When the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan captured David Hicks nearly two years ago and gave him to the U.S. Army, he had no idea what lay ahead for him. For months now, Hicks has not been charged with a crime, but has been jailed at Guantanamo Bay, a prison camp in Cuba with miles of razor-coiled fencing and small cages for prison cells.

Ironically, Guantanamo Bay is famous not for what it keeps in, namely 660 supposed terrorists, but for what it keeps out: lawyers, family members and the protections afforded to prisoners of war by the Geneva Conventions.

Yet, this does not bother Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. With a straight face, he recently asserted that the United States has a right to keep men like Hicks in metal cages until the war on terrorism ends; in other words, indefinitely. Rumsfeld should realize that such imprisonments are illegal since they deprive humans the basic rights given to them by international law.

Hicks is a citizen of Australia, a nation that, similar to the United States, was party to the Geneva Conventions, a widely respected body of international law. The Third Geneva Convention dealt with the capturing of prisoners during wartime. The convention guaranteed basic humanitarian and legal rights to any person detained by a warring state. These ranged from the right to engage in religious and physical activity while captive, to the right to a lawyer and trial.

However, those imprisoned have been denied some of these rights. This is because Rumsfeld has said the detainees "will be handled not as prisoners of war, because they are not, but as unlawful combatants." Apparently this designation makes the captives less human and much more criminal than a normal prisoner of war, and causes them to lose their basic human and legal rights.

Besides, calling a duck a chicken does not change the fact that it is a duck. Just the same, Rumsfeld may call the detainees anything he wishes, but it will not change the fact that they are prisoners of war. Still, if there is any doubt as to a captive's standing, the Geneva Convention makes it clear that Rumsfeld does not have the power to decide whether a captive is a prisoner of war.



MIDHAT FAROOQI

Article Five of the Third Geneva Convention says if anyone is detained in the course of an armed conflict, he is presumed to be a prisoner of war until a competent court or tribunal determines otherwise. Plus, the status of each detainee is to be determined individually, not by a blanket decision issued by the Secretary of Defense.

Rumsfeld does not have the power to decide how long these people can be held, though he thinks he does. Rumsfeld recently said the men at Guantanamo would be detained for the course of the global war on terrorism rather than face trial. "Our interest is in not trying them and letting them out," he said. "Our interest is in — during this global war on terror — keeping them off the streets, and so that's what's taking place."

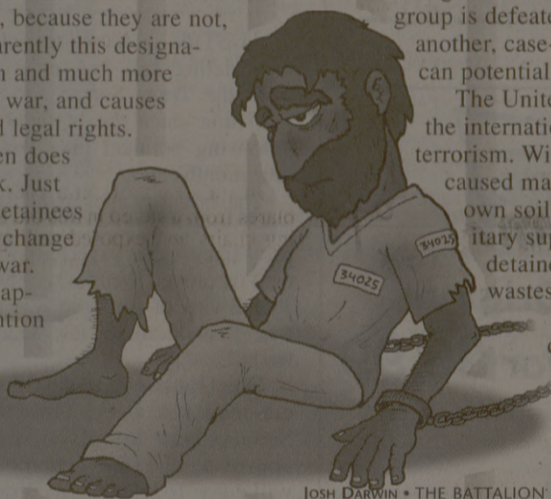
But, human beings have suffered from these unilateral assessments. Another Australian citizen, Mamdouh Habib, wrote this to his wife while imprisoned in Guantanamo: "I've been blindfolded for eight months, I never see the sun but I see you and your kids every minute."

Personal interests in a matter of human rights and international law are irrelevant. It is all the more worrisome when the Secretary of Defense believes that the detainees, if put on trial, would be acquitted and free to walk. This makes their imprisonment less valid. If indeed they are criminals, put them on trial, prove they are guilty, then lock them up and keep them off the streets.

Meanwhile, at least tell the prisoners how long they will be incarcerated. "Until the war ends" is incredibly vague, especially when referring to the war on terrorism. This conflict is not between two nations, but between one state and terrorism across the globe. There is no one specific enemy, for after one group is defeated, the United States can move on to another, case-in-point: Afghanistan and Iraq. This war can potentially last for decades.

The United States has benefited enormously from the international community during the global war on terrorism. Widespread sympathy for the United States caused many countries to hunt terrorists on their own soil, share intelligence and send America military support. By ignoring the rights of those detained in Guantanamo Bay, the White House wastes this intangible but priceless asset, and gains nothing but a fleeting chance for quick revenge.

Midhat Farooqi is a senior genetics major.



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## Hindering the peace process

### Arafat is the greatest obstacle to stopping violence

For more than 50 years, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has resulted in bloodshed and tears for both sides involved. Some say the current terrorist acts are only a Palestinian reaction to Israeli aggression. Critics of Israel cite the Jewish settlements in the West Bank or targeted assassinations of Hamas leaders as only hindering the possibility of peace.

Yet the main obstacle on the road to peace in the Middle East is Israel's staunchest critic, Yasser Arafat himself. For any kind of peace agreement to be reached, Arafat must be removed from power.

In both 1948 and 1967, surrounding Arabic nations attacked Israel. In both cases, Israel defended itself and captured land that once belonged to the Jewish people more than 2,000 years ago. Israeli officials have repeatedly vowed to work with the Palestinian leadership and surrounding countries to work out disagreements over disputed lands in the West Bank and Gaza. They have upheld their end of the bargain.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Arafat and the Palestinian Authority.

In 2002 during a raid on Arafat's compound, Israeli forces found documents proving the Palestinian Authority has provided financial resources to terrorist groups such as Hamas. According to the Telegraph News in February 2002, Israeli naval commandos seized a ship named the Karin-A in the Red Sea. Captained by a Palestinian, this ship was bound for the Palestinian Authority armed with weapons capable of launching rocket attacks on Israel.

The militant wing of Arafat's own Fatah Movement has repeatedly claimed responsibility for deadly attacks against Israeli civilians on public buses and in

Israeli streets. In a poor attempt at public relations, Arafat has condemned these attacks, yet his actions speak louder than his false statements.

Arafat is nothing more than a terrorist, and the documents found in his own compound prove that, along with his record as a provoker of anger and incitement toward Israel.

Former President Bill Clinton attempted to broker a peace agreement during the Camp David talks in December 2000. According to ABC News, Israel made "significant concessions." Those included 97 percent of the West Bank, all of Gaza and 3 percent of Israeli lands in exchange for one simple objective: peace.

Rather than agree to this offer that more than likely would have paved the way toward an independent Palestinian state, Arafat walked away from the table. This even stunned American negotiators.

The real goal of terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah isn't to stop Jewish settlements or to create a Palestinian state; it is to wipe out Israel entirely. Throughout the Middle East, children are taught in their schools that the Holocaust is simply a made-up Jewish lie, that Americans and Jews alike are enemies and that terrorism will make you an honorable martyr. It should be no surprise that this breeding ground of hate only contributes to hatred of Israelis, resulting in constant terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians.

Many around the world equate Israeli military strikes on terrorists with Palestinian suicide bombings. They claim that for the violence to end, Israel must withdraw from the occupied territories and end its assassination attempts on

Hamas and other terrorist officials. Yet these people fail to realize the overall perspective at hand.

Like the United States, Israel should make no concessions with terrorists. If they make concessions now, they will continue to make concessions and build a slippery slope that is bound only to get worse.

If Palestinians really want their own state, they must work from within to dismantle terrorist groups that prevent both sides from achieving a two-state solution. Arafat's recent undermining of Abu Mazen, the new Palestinian prime minister, proves once again that he lacks the ability to negotiate peace with Israel.

For peace to reign, Palestinians need a new leader that is willing to put peace ahead of violence.

Although Israel's admission that it is willing to expel Arafat from his Ramallah compound is controversial, it is the only way for both sides to work toward legitimate peace. As long as Arafat remains in power, terrorist groups

throughout Palestinian lands will continue to murder innocent Israeli civilians.

Neither Israel nor the Palestinian Authority has been perfect; both have made mistakes. However, Israel's actions during the Camp David talks and Arafat's own actions prove that Israel is making an honest effort to rectify the problems facing both sides. Most Palestinians dream of an independent and sovereign state. Without Arafat in the picture, if they simply cease terrorism on Israelis, that dream may one day become a reality.

Jonathan Steed is a senior political science major.

